

Women's Societies

SUGGESTIONS.

By Miss C. L. Campbell.

"If any two . . . agree . . . it shall be done."—Jesus.

That all minds may be turned to prayer before entering on the year's work, so far beyond our power of accomplishing without "divine co-operation," it may be well to use these thoughts in your devotional exercises at your first meeting in 1917.

After these are read, ask as many as ten or twelve of your members to make sentence prayers, even if you have to write them out beforehand.

In the morning, rising up a great while before day, he went out—and prayed. Mark 1:35.

And he withdrew himself into the wilderness and prayed. Luke 5:16.

He went into a mountain apart to pray. Matt. 14:23.

And as he prayed, the fashion of his countenance was altered. Luke 9:29.

He went out into a mountain to pray and continued all night in prayer to God. Luke 6:12.

Pray without ceasing. Paul.

If ye abide in me . . . ask—it shall be done. John 15:7.

Ask and it shall be given. Matt. 7:7.

You can do more than pray after you have prayed, but you cannot do more than pray until you have prayed.—S. D. Gordon.

We must not conceive of prayer as an overcoming of God's reluctance, but as a laying hold of His highest willingness.—Archbishop Trench.

Prayer is simply giving the wise and good God an opportunity to do what His wisdom and love want done.—Fosdick.

The experience of the race is clear that some things God never can do until He finds a man who prays.—Fosdick.

Prayer is and remains the native and deepest impulse of the soul of man.—Carlyle.

Prayer is my chief work, and it is by means of it that I carry on the rest.—Thomas Hooker.

True prayer is deliberately putting ourselves at God's disposal.—Fosdick.

The co-operation of a man's prayer backed by his life, opened a way for the divine purpose—there was an invasion of the world by God through Livingstone.—Fosdick.

Prayer digs out those treasures which the gospel of the Lord discovers to our faith.—Calvin.

We can do nothing of real power until we have done the prayer thing.—S. D. Gordon.

It is the doing that grows out of praying that is mightiest in touching human hearts.—S. D. Gordon.

"For many years it has been my practice in traveling among the nations to make a study of the sources of the spiritual movements which are doing most to vitalize and transform individuals and communities. At times it has been difficult to discover the hidden spring, but invariably where I have had the time and patience to do so, I have found it in an incessant prayer life of great reality."—John R. Mott.

TO THE VIRGINIA SYNODICAL.

If obligations come, those who are working for the "doubling" of gifts in Virginia, may find the words given below very helpful. The gentleness in this answer will do away with need of irritating argument.

Carrie Lee Campbell,
Syn. Sec. For. Missions.

How Long Shall I Give?

"Go break to the needy sweet charity's bread;

For, giving is living," the angel said. "And must I be giving again and again?"

My peevish and pitiless answer ran.

"Oh, no!" said the angel, piercing me through,

"Just give till the Master stops giving to you."

Missionary Review of the World.

HOME RELIGION.

The great need of the Church today is a revival of home religion. This is fundamental. As is the home, so is the community and the church. This is conceded by all those who are in the forefront as leaders in Christian endeavor. Prominent ministers and laymen all over our country are ready to co-operate in some plan that will bring about a change of conditions in the home life of the church. The conviction of this need became so pronounced a few years ago in the hearts of a few men keenly interested in the welfare of the church that the Family Altar League was organized. The growth of the movement since has been nothing less than wonderful. God has set His seal of approval upon the league. During the past seven years 300,000 Covenant Cards have been distributed, over 60,000 homes have affiliated with the movement, and it is estimated that more than 250,000 lives have been influenced for good. A monthly magazine has been published containing daily readings with comments and helpful suggestions for the home life. Cards and literature may be obtained without cost. Dr. Biederwolf, the founder, is raising an endowment fund of \$100,000.00, of which \$36,000.00 has been subscribed.

The league has grown so rapidly that the directors decided recently to open larger headquarters and engage a general secretary. Since he took charge of the work plans have been adopted for a country-wide campaign. The most important work of the secretary is addressing churches and conventions and conducting conferences. He will be glad to assist pastors in introducing the movement into their churches. The following well-known men are among the directors: Dr. John Timothy Stone, Dr. Francis E. Clark, Bishop Edwin H. Hughes, Rev. W. E. Biederwolf, Bishop Charles B. Mitchell, Marion Lawrance, J. Campbell White, Henry P. Crowell, Dr. James M. Grey, Judge McKenzie Cleland and E. O. Excell.

For information and literature address the General Secretary, Family Altar League, 508 Lakeside Building, Chicago, Ill.

Fred Paton, son of the noted missionary, John G. Paton, writes that one can always tell a Christian from a heathen by his personal appearance. "Even the countenances of the children show a change when the gospel has been at work. In the heathen villages the children are always in a state of fear and terror. But it is delightful to notice the fun and frolic of the children in the Christian villages."

We fain would speak; God says "Be still";

We'd run; but he says, "Stay." The bitter cup our lips refuse,

His voice says, "Drink, to-day."

Oh, heart of mine, in questioning,

Leave all things in his hands,

Who, though he never tells us why,

Yet always understands.

THE PRAYER MEETING

CONGREGATIONAL HOME MISSIONS.

"Beginning at Jerusalem."

January 10, 1917.

Read Luke 24:45-53; 1 Thess. 1:10.

By Rev. Russell Cecil, D. D.

Every true church should be a missionary society. It should not be a close corporation, a mutual benefit organization, nor a social club; but it should be a missionary society pure and simple, charged with the work of propagating the gospel. It is by this method that our Lord chose to extend the benefit of the gospel. He said to the early disciples, "Ye are my witnesses;" and his purpose concerning them was that each one should become a missionary in the place where he lived. So every congregation of Christ's witnesses gathered together and organized into a church should be a missionary society. The tendency among churches is to live too much for themselves and their own improvement and happiness. Some churches seem to have little interest in anything beyond their own membership. They want the finest church, the finest choir, and the finest preacher they can possibly secure; and then in a spirit of self-satisfaction and mutual admiration they sit down on cushioned seats to enjoy themselves. It is often hard to break into such a church and secure recognition in it. It goes without saying that our Lord Jesus Christ had no such notion in mind when he sent forth his disciples as his witnesses, to organize churches for the extension of the gospel among men. He had a much broader, more sympathetic and humane view than this. The church which he proposed was to be a democratic organization, in which the members were to enjoy equal rights and privileges, and share equal burdens; and they were to be interested alike in the salvation of the people about them.

The normal condition of every individual church organization is to be actively engaged in mission work in the locality in which it is situated. Every pastor and church session should be constantly on the lookout for the organization of Sunday-schools and the establishment of new churches. The church which is doing the work which the Master intended it to do is not simply engaged in building up itself and securing a large and powerful organization, but it should be continually preparing and sending out consecrated men and women in the regions round about, who shall engage in active missionary enterprises among the poor and needy. Sometimes a pastor may remain in charge of one church for a score of years and do nothing except perhaps build up a single organization in numbers and power. Whereas another will take the same organization, and in the same length of time establish a half dozen mission all around it, which will develop into independent churches. I know of a minister who went to a town of five or six thousand people a few years ago, which had in it only one strong Presbyterian church, and no missions, or at least none worth mentioning. He had only been there two or three years until he had started four or five Sunday-schools, most of which have already developed into independent organizations. This is the true work of the local church.

The church does not in this way weaken itself. On the contrary, it becomes stronger as it sends out its members into mission work, and as

it is willing to impoverish itself of members and means to build up other churches. It is the very best way to develop Christian character. No Christian can be constantly taking in—feeding himself upon good preaching and edifying spiritual services—and yet give out nothing to others, and still remain in a healthy spiritual condition. "There is that scattereth, and yet increaseth; and there is that withholdeth more than is meet, but it tendeth to poverty." This is just as true in Christian service as in Christian benevolence. The Christian spirit grows strong by active exercise, just as the muscles of the body increase in strength and power by use. The two key words of the gospel are "Come" and "Go." The first is, Come to the Saviour and receive life at his hands, and the second is, Go and tell others what you have found in Jesus. Every church, therefore, should be filled with people who are continually coming and going, and no church which can be characterized in this way can fail to grow strong.

When our Lord departed from the world and left the work of preaching the gospel and establishing the kingdom in the hands of the disciples, he was careful to tell them to begin at Jerusalem. It was not necessary for them to leave the place where he had been arrested, tried and executed, and where it might have been supposed that they would meet with great animosity and opposition. But they were to begin right there in the heart of things, in the midst of his enemies, and bearing all the reproach that attached to his crucifixion, and there they were to make known to the people about them the meaning of his coming into the world, his life, his death, his resurrection, and his ascension to heaven. If the church could not have started in Jerusalem we may reasonably suppose it could not have started anywhere. But inasmuch as it soon secured a firm footing in the very center of the Jewish nation its existence was insured, and the work which it was organized to do had a good beginning. It is not right for any church to imagine that it cannot grow and do good work in any place if it is surrounded by human beings who are "without God and without hope in the world." Where the people are, and where they need the gospel, that is where the church ought to be, and where it ought to do its work. If every single church, large and small, in our Southern Presbyterian organization, should become an active missionary center, the influence of such a general movement would be powerfully felt, and the growth of the church in members and in influence within the next few years would be beyond a reasonable calculation. We could hardly imagine what an impetus it would give to the work if many of our small churches, which are now, and have been for many years, struggling for existence, should become active and aggressive, and liberal of their members and of their means, and should practice for awhile giving out rather than gathering in. It would produce a marvelous transformation. We have so many little churches, which have lived on the Home Missionary Committee for years and years, which ought long ago to have been independent and sources of light and help to others. Be sure that the church you belong to is a missionary church.

THE MID-WEEK PRAYER SERVICE.

How can we best develop a deeper interest in the prayer meeting? This question has long been a problem with many pastors and in many churches. It is an almost unanimous opinion that this "spiritual thermometer" of church life certainly needs some in-